

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /049 W
-----099844 232046Z /64

R 230348Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5111
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

UNCLAS RANGOON 1025

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, ENRG, BM
SUBJ: BURMA AIRWAYS EXPANDS FLIGHT SCHEDULE

1. BEGINNING APRIL 1 BURMA AIRWAYS CORPORATION WILL INAUGURATE WEEKLY SERVICE TO DACCA AND BEGIN TWICE WEEKLY FLIGHTS TO SINGAPORE. BAC WILL USE ITS F-28 ON BOTH RUNS.

2. THE FLIGHT TO DACCA (UB223) WILL BE EACH THURSDAY AND WILL CONTINUE ON TO CALCUTTA. THE RETURN FLIGHT FROM CALCUTTA (UB224) WILL ALSO STOP AT DACCA ENROUTE TO RANGOON.

3. THE ONCE A WEEK (MONDAY) BAC RANGOON-SINGAPORE-RANGOON FLIGHT WILL BE REPLACED BY TWO FLIGHTS A WEEK ON WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS. ON BOTH DAYS THE FLIGHT (UB 231) WILL DEPART RANGOON AT 0715 LOCAL TIME AND ARRIVE SINGAPORE AT 11:15; THE RETURN FLIGHT (UB 232) WILL DEPART SINGAPORE AT 12:15 AND ARRIVE RANGOON AT 14:15.

4. BAC FLIGHTS BETWEEN RANGOON AND CALCUTTA SELDOM CARRY A PROFITABLE PAYLOAD. THE ENROUTE STOP AT DACCA MAY HAVE BEEN ADDED IN THE HOPE THAT THIS WOULD ATTRACT ENOUGH ADDED UNCLASSIFIED

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PASSENGERS TO MAKE THE FLIGHT MORE ECONOMICAL.

5. THE DIRECT BAC FLIGHT TO AND FROM SINGAPORE ALSO CARRIES FEW PASSENGERS. THE COMMENCEMENT OF TWICE A WEEK SERVICE HAS GIVEN RISE TO SPECULATION THAT THE GUB MAY SOON OPEN OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION CONCESSIONS TO FOREIGN PETROLEUM FIRMS. PRESUMABLY THE BAC FLIGHTS WOULD THEN BE PROFITABLE

AS THE OIL COMPANIES WOULD BE SHUTTLING PERSONNEL BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND BURMA. THE GUB BAN ON OFFICIAL TRAVELERS TRANSITING THROUGH BANGKOK MAY HAVE BEEN AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN ADDING A SECOND FLIGHT TO SINGAPORE. THE BAN HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE AND EXPENSE FOR GUB TRAVELERS, AND HAS HAD TO BE RELAXED IN RECENT WEEKS. TWO DIRECT FLIGHTS A WEEK TO SINGAPORE WOULD MEAN THAT MOST GUB OFFICIALS COULD MAKE ONWARD AND RETURN CONNECTIONS WITH A MINIMUM OF DELAY AND INCONVENIENCE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR SCHEDULES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RANGOO01025
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780129-0018
Format: TEL
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780332/aaaabape.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f0b8d7be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3224800
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BURMA AIRWAYS EXPANDS FLIGHT SCHEDULE
TAGS: EAIR, BM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f0b8d7be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014